



81-1918
General Counsel
81-06526

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

STAT

July 21, 1981

Admiral Robert R. Inman
Central Intelligence Agency
Langeley, VA



STAT

Dear Admiral Inman:

There is one facet of the position of the C.I.A. concerning revisions of the Freedom of Information Act which I hope you will review. Those documents which the C.I.A. sends forward to other agencies, and which have impact on major decisions, and historical studies that can inform future policy-makers, probably need an F.O.I.A.-type process, which can be initiated by outsiders, and bring these documents to your desk, and other senior C.I.A. officials, for declassification review.

I work in the field of government learning rates, and institutional memories work in odd ways. Detailed knowledge of the history of events in the past two decades come, even for senior political officials, almost exclusively from academic and journalistic sources which they read in the years while they are "waiting in the wings." After four years, it's a good rule of thumb that classified documents are ones no one, including government itself, learns from.

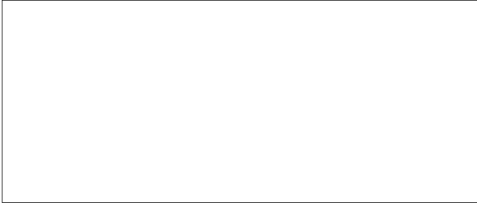
I am currently doing research on lessons that were drawn from the Bay of Pigs invasion--and I must say, respectfully, given the many months of delays that are occurring past legal deadlines, that I hope the Agency might do a better job of responding. But there are two documents--an Inspector General's report, and a "reclama" by D.D.P.--that seek to sort out lessons. Since declassification of the Taylor Report and Wyden's book it is unlikely that there are many unacknowledged secrets that need to be screened for another ten years. But whatever value might go from this work of your predecessors to inform students, and the next Administration, of any cumulative lessons does depend--even if fragilely--on the F.O.I.A. process.

I don't know how to write an appropriate revision to legislation, but I think we do need to preserve a channel within the Agency that can be used in these types of cases.

-2-

Largely unrelated to these comments, I am enclosing a review of ideas about the government learning rate problem which I wanted to pass along to you and the attention of your staff with my best wishes.

STAT



Enclosure

STAT